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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PCOV](#) [ASEC](#) [EAIR](#) [KPAO](#) [YM](#)  
SUBJECT: YEMEN PROTESTS "COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT" OFNEW

PASSENGER SCREENING POLICIES

Classified B: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On January 18, Deputy Foreign Minister Mohyadeen al-Dhabbi summoned a diverse group of ambassadors to express the ROYG's concerns about new passenger screening procedures for international air travel that, in his characterization, unfairly subjects all Yemeni nationals to additional and unwarranted scrutiny. He warned that this "collective punishment" threatened the ROY's CT efforts by creating the impression that the international community regards all Yemenis as errorists. The Ambassador explained that TSA procedures scrutinize all travelers who visit Yemen and other designated countries, regardless of the travelers' nationality. Although the new TSA procedures have not attracted attention in the Yemeni press, Dhabbi's protestations suggest that the guidelines are about to become an issue in the bilateral relationship. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On January 18, Deputy Foreign Minister Mohyadeen al-Dhabbi summoned a diverse group of ambassadors to express the ROYG's concerns about newly implemented passenger screening procedures for international travel that put "all Yemenis on the blacklist." Without mentioning the U.S. or TSA specifically, he said that the new procedures unfairly subject all Yemeni nationals to additional screening. "Twenty-three million people, wherever they're traveling, whatever they're doing, they are wanted ... The whole Yemeni people are penalized by being put on the blacklist." Dhabbi said that extremists operating in Yemen should not be construed as representative of all Yemeni travelers, just as EU and U.S. nationals who are involved in extremist activities do not represent their countries.

13. (C) Describing Yemen's recent "successful efforts against al-Qaeda" with "many (extremists) killed or arrested," Dhabbi suggested that the "collective punishment" inflicted on the Yemeni people by the new passenger screening procedures undermines the ROYG's CT campaign. He said "We don't know who these (procedures) serve. We need the Yemeni people with us in the fight against terrorism." He said that the procedures create the impression that the international community regards all Yemeni travelers as potential extremists, leaving the Yemeni public mistrustful of CT efforts.

14. (C) Addressing USG-instituted passenger screening procedures in the wake of the December 25 bombing attempt in Detroit, the Ambassador explained that TSA guidelines stipulate additional scrutiny for all passengers who have traveled to Yemen (and other TSA-designated countries) during their itinerary, not only Yemeni nationals. "This isn't a measure that seeks to target the citizens of any nation," he said, emphasizing that the goal of the TSA guidelines is to address gaps in aviation security. Dhabbi said that "there is a better way" of improving aviation security, and welcomed assistance to upgrade security in Yemen's airports.

COMMENT  
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15. (C) Although the new TSA procedures have not yet been reported in the Yemeni press, Dhabbi's protestations suggest that the guidelines are about to become a sticking point in U.S.-Yemeni relations. The planned visit of an ATA team to Sana'a International Airport to assist in upgrading the airport's security procedures presents an opportunity to put a better face on USG efforts to improve aviation security in Yemen. END COMMENT.  
SECHE